

Leaders' Guide for Contingency Operations: The Human Dimension

Results from ARI research on soldier attitudes and opinions with respect to their experiences in contingency operations have been compiled into a guide for leaders on issues affecting soldier motivation and morale during contingency operations.

ARI research of the attitudes and opinions of soldiers deployed for contingency operations identified recurring issues that emerge during contingency operations and impact on soldier motivation and morale. These issues and associated recommendations are presented in a guide for leaders to use both prior to and during contingency operations.

The guide is designed to help leaders prepare their units before the deployment and address issues that arise during the deployment. It also can be used by leaders in officer and NCO professional development conducted at the unit, and in self-development. It is organized around the following 13 issues:

- Mission Clarity
- Situation Stability
- Amount of Threat/Lethality
- Complexity of the Force
- Complexity of the Environment
- Specificity of Advanced Preparation
- Duration of Deployment
- Media Visibility
- Range of Job Tasks
- Quality of Leadership
- Quality of Life
- Amount of Family Support
- Quality of Rear Detachment

Each of these issues is discussed very briefly below.

THE ISSUES

Mission Clarity - The degree of mission clarity, both prior to and during the operation, impacts the extent to which soldiers and leaders question their participation in the mission. In addition to providing soldiers with a broad framework for understanding the operation, leaders need to tell soldiers how the specific tasks and details they are performing during the operation contribute to overall mission success. Also, leaders need to provide soldiers with an opportunity to see the improvements that have resulted from the Army's presence.

Situation Stability - Situation stability and predictability, both within and across contingency operations, impact readiness and soldier attitudes toward the mission. Changes in stability and predictability require renewed effort on the part of leaders to maintain soldier and family support for the mission. Leaders need to anticipate soldier resistance to change and recognize that providing reasons for the change will help overcome their resistance.

Amount of Threat/Lethality - Perceptions of the amount of threat and lethality affect soldier and family concerns about the mission. Soldier perceptions of the threat also affect their attitudes toward force protection rules, rules of engagement, and the nature of the mission. It is important to address policies in these areas prior to deployment, particularly when they differ from those in garrison or from previous deployments. Throughout the deployment, leaders need to identify and address soldier concerns regarding force protection rules and tactical security.

Complexity of the Force - Contingency operations challenge soldiers and leaders to coordinate and interact with a complex military force that differs from operation to operation. This force may include

personnel from different types of units, different Army components, other U. S. services, and militaries from other countries. Leaders need to use liaisons or individuals familiar with other services or militaries to facilitate coordination and cooperation. Currently deployed units need to provide their replacement units with the lessons they learned about interacting with a complex force. AC and RC soldiers and leaders should be required to demonstrate and encourage mutual respect between the components in theater and at backfill locations.

Complexity of the Environment - Contingency operations challenge soldiers and leaders to interact in a complex environment that differs from operation to operation. Soldiers and leaders may be required to interact with non-government organizations, contractors, formerly warring factions, local police forces, and local community leaders. Recommendations are to: train leaders to recognize when it is and is not appropriate for them to interact

with the local population; use liaisons to help interpret the reactions of the local population; and recognize that approaches that work in the environment of one operation will not necessarily work in the environment of another.

Specificity of Advanced Preparation - The specificity and realism of advanced preparation impacts soldier assessments of the adequacy of pre-deployment preparation and training. Soldiers especially value mission-specific, scenario-driven training shortly before deployment and written materials on the area to which they will deploy (e.g., on history, terrain, climate, culture). Not only do logistical plans need to be worked out in advance — especially for the first few weeks — but they need to be communicated to soldiers, as well.

Duration of Deployment - The duration of deployment impacts soldier satisfaction. Soldiers' perceptions about the length of the deployment are



U.S. Forces in Haiti

based on much more than just the number of months of the current deployment. Some other factors they consider are: duration and frequency of their previous deployments; the length of their deployment compared to that of other military personnel; and the purpose of the deployment. Leaders need to help soldiers understand the factors that determine deployment length and provide them with a realistic estimate of the length of the deployment. Leaders also should let soldiers know that the exact date of redeployment may not be known in advance. Finally, they also should control rumors regarding changes in length of deployment and the redeployment date.

Media Visibility - The amount and favorability of media coverage of contingency operations affect soldier and family attitudes. Problems can arise when soldiers perceive too much or too little media coverage. Recommendations are to: prepare leaders and soldiers for talking with the media; develop unit procedures for providing the media with access to information; monitor relevant information provided by the media; and be prepared to address soldier concerns that may arise.

Range of Job Tasks - The types of job tasks soldiers and leaders are required to perform during contingency operations affect acceptance of their individual participation in the mission. Prior to the deployment, leaders need to prepare units and soldiers for the additional mission tasks that the soldiers will have to perform, such as guard duty. Even with advance preparation, soldiers often question during the operation why they are required to perform certain jobs and tasks. Leaders need to provide a framework that shows soldiers how their assigned tasks are consistent with and contribute to overall mission success. Tasks assigned to soldiers should be meaningful and not busywork.

Quality of Leadership - Quality of leadership affects soldier morale and attitudes toward the operation and the Army as a whole. The quality of leadership has been judged more critically by soldiers during contingency operations than in garrison. Communication both up and down the chain needs to be strengthened to help soldiers understand the rationale for leader actions and to increase leader awareness of soldier concerns. When possible,

provide soldiers with the rationale for leader decisions and actions. Leaders should always demonstrate Army values.

Quality of Life - The quality of life during contingency operations impacts soldier satisfaction and attitudes toward the Army. Soldiers assess their quality of life with respect to treatment, policies, and amenities provided. Their assessments are based not only on actual conditions, but on their expectations and on comparisons with others in the current operation. Prior to deployment, leaders need to communicate R&R and leave policies, including differences between policies for the current and other deployments and differences between downrange and garrison. During the deployment, leaders need to minimize inequities and be ready to address any differences across groups in quality of life.

Amount of Family Support - The amount of family support for the mission and the Army affects soldier morale. Family support is a function of many factors including understanding of the mission; perceived level of danger to the soldiers; perception of Army support for families during deployment; amount and accuracy of information families receive about the mission and the soldiers; and ease and availability of communication with soldiers. Leaders need to communicate to families and soldiers the importance of the mission and measures taken to ensure soldier safety. In addition, leaders need to communicate to soldiers the resources available to their families and to encourage spouse participation in family support groups.

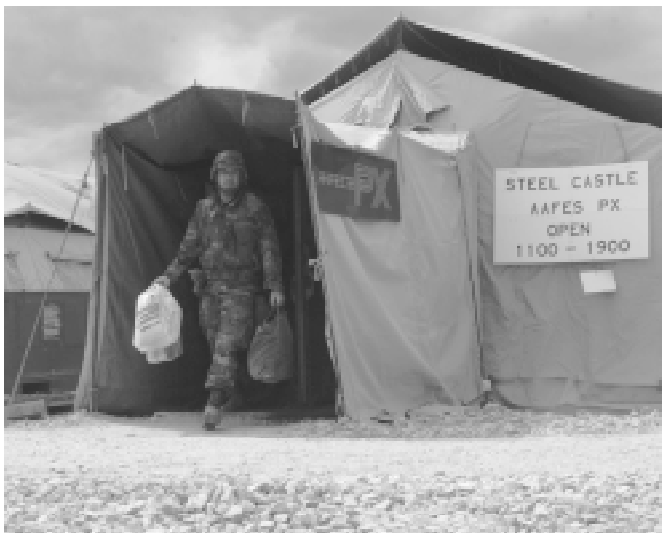
Quality of Rear Detachment - The perceived quality of the rear detachment affects unit and soldier morale. Leaders need to clarify the role of the rear detachment for both soldiers and families. They need to recognize the importance of the rear detachment and assign a competent commander.

CONCLUSIONS

Together, the issues and the recommendations presented in the guide represent leadership lessons learned that can be used both before and during contingency operations. Before an operation, these

lessons serve as a tool for effectively preparing leaders and soldiers for the mission. During the operation, these lessons serve as a reference guide and reminder of important factors leaders need to address.

Two themes are evident throughout the guide. The first is the need to anticipate and adapt to changes. Viewing the issues presented in the guide as dimensions that can vary on a continuum, both from operation to operation and within a given operation, can help reinforce the need to anticipate change. When soldiers expect change, they are more likely to accept, prepare, and adapt to it.



Quality of life during contingency operations impacts soldier satisfaction and attitudes.

The second theme is the need for more and better communication. Leaders need to recognize and to take into account that the frame of reference of subordinate leaders and soldiers may differ from their own. Keeping this in mind will help leaders to recognize the need to increase the information flow to soldiers, particularly with respect to the issues addressed in the guide.

For additional information or to receive a copy of the *Leaders' Guide for Contingency Operations: The Human Dimension*, contact Dr. Alma Steinberg, ARI-Cheif, Army Trends Analysis Group, DSN 767-0364 or Commercial (703) 617-0364. steinberg@ari.army.mil

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